

LYNN FUSAN: Good morning. And thank you to the Bureau of Land Management for hosting this public forum. My name is Lynn Fusan. I'm a native of Bell County in Southeastern Kentucky. I have been a Knoxville resident for more than twenty years. Though I own my own business now, for twelve years, beginning in 1992, I served as an employee in the Oak Ridge, Tennessee office of the engineering and environmental complaint division of a California-based international corporation. During that time, I worked on a variety of detailed environmental reports to the federal agencies, including environmental impact statements, baseline risk assessments, engineering assessments, cost analyses, remedial action reports, and records of decision. I understand why it is important to impose a permanent moratorium nationwide on proposed coal leases. When I was a young girl in Kentucky, strip mining was our region's primary economic engine. Mining is no longer the primary employer in Southeastern Kentucky and Eastern Tennessee. Mechanization has reduced the number of people directly employed in the coal industry to a handful. The market for coal is dwindling. The Tennessee Valley Authority is shutting coal-fired plants. Keeping unmined coal in the ground improves air quality and reduces the need for coal ash storage impoundments. We have already endured the nightmare of coal ash impoundment rupture. Shortly after 1 a.m., December 22, 2008, one of these impoundments failed about forty miles southwest of here at TVA's Kingston Steam Plant. Mere words cannot describe the resulting scene. I invite you to use the Internet to see photographs and view videos. Twenty-two homes were affected directly, including one that was pushed from its foundation. The best way to describe the scene is that it looked like the surface of the moon. An estimated 4.2 million cubic meters of coal ash slurry rushed into the Emory and Clinch Rivers. To date, the Kingston ash spill ranks as the largest fly ash release in United States history. On January 1, 2009, the first independent tests were conducted following the coal ash spill at the Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry Laboratories at Appalachian State University. Results show significantly elevated levels of toxic metals in with the slurry and river water. These toxic metals included arsenic, copper, barium, cadmium, chromium, lead, mercury, nickel, and thallium. Most importantly, we no longer need coal. Renewable energy is the future. Fortune Magazine's January 16, 2016 issue noted: "Last year, the solar sector added workers at a rate that was almost twelve times faster than the overall economy. In fact, 1.2 percent of all jobs or 1 in 83 jobs created in the U.S. last year were solar jobs." A permanent moratorium on federal coal leases is needed to fulfill our country's commitment to reducing greenhouse gases to fulfill our commitment to reduce global temperature rise to two degrees Celsius. This week, temperatures in parts of India were above 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Paved roads melted. Extreme weather incidents increase as ice at or near our earth's poles melts. Peer review's scientist agrees. Burning fossil fuel directly contributes to global warming. Instituting a permanent moratorium on coal leases is the only responsible action. Thank you for your time.